



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, July 22, 2013

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (13-3513)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chair Geneva Berger, Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner Daphne Ng, Commissioner Becky A. Shevlin, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused: Commissioner Steven M. Olivas Esq. and Commissioner Sandra Rudnick

Call to Order. (13-3415)

The meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Introduction of July 22, 2013 Meeting attendees. (13-3416)

Self-introductions were made.

2. Approval of the July 22, 2013 Meeting Agenda. (13-3417)

On motion of Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, unanimously carried, (Commissioners Olivas and Rudnick being absent), this item was approved.

DRAFT

3. Approval of the minutes from the Meeting of July 8, 2013. (13-3419)

On motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Trevino Powell, (Commissioners Olivas and Rudnick being absent) and Commissioner Becky A. Shevlin abstaining, this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's report for July 22, 2013 by Geneva Berger, Chair. (13-3421)

Chair Berger reported the following:

- **The Los Angeles County Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors has implemented a new electronic Committee Book System. Any Commissioners who received an e-mail from BOS Committee Book at committeebook@bos.lacounty.gov with notification of a reappointment are encouraged to submit their Statement of Qualifications online. A logon ID and password is provided in the body of the notification. If Commissioners have questions or encounter any difficulties submitting the Statement of Qualifications online, please contact Commission Staff or Committee Book Staff.**
- **As a protocol moving forward, all responses furnished after the meeting by County Departments or Agencies' to Commission questions at the meetings will be included in the minutes and subject to public record.**
- **A Safe Sleep for Baby Partnership Training will be held Tuesday, August 13, 2013, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM at the California Endowment, 1000 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles 90012. Commissioners interested in attending, should let Commission Staff know. This training event is being co-sponsored by First 5 LA and ICAN (Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect)**
- **Planning for the Commission's Annual Retreat is underway. Commission staff will be sending notification to Commissioners on the time and location.**
- **As a result of discussion surrounding the Commission's standing Faith-Based Committee, the Community Agency Partnership (CAP) Workgroup was formed to take a broader approach that includes working with Agencies and Community partnerships. Commissioners Curry and Kang will Chair and Co-Chair this Workgroup.**

Members of this Workgroup will include, Commissioners Ng, Shevlin and Trevino-Powell. Additionally, Vice Chair Kleinberg and Commissioner Sorkin are working on forming a Visitation focused Workgroup.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Agenda Item 5 was taken after Agenda Item 8.

- 5. DCFS Director's report for July 22, 2013 by Philip Browning, Director, DCFS. (13-3422)**

Director Browning reported the following:

- A presentation will be furnished to the Board on August 6, 2013 on the Strategic Plan Update and DCFS Budget.**
- The most recent Quality Service Review (QSR) showed a dramatic increase in scores.**
- Training on the Core Practice Model is being done with staff and will be conducted with the mental health providers, Foster Family Agencies (FFA) and Group Homes. The plan is to provide training to foster parents as well.**
- The New Children's Social Worker (CSW) Training Program (Program) has its first class starting in about three weeks. The restructured program includes a simulation component where workers will be trained using a "mock environment" similar to the homes CSWs visit. The Program is fifty-two weeks; training previously lasted eight weeks.**
- Recently, media reports have indicated that detentions have remained the same for the past seven years.**
- Probation Department has agreed to assist with background checks that are required before placing a child with a relative or family friend. This should assist in finding suitable placement in emergency situations.**
- There are more children under age ten coming into the Command Post. This increase in younger children was not anticipated.**
- Candidates for the Blue Ribbon Commission have been announced. A notice to all DCFS staff will be sent out with information on the members.**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

III. DISCUSSIONS/APPROVAL

- 6. Discussion and approval to disband the Commission's Faith-Based Committee. (13-3426)**

Commissioner Sorkin requested this item be tabled for further discussion at the Commission's upcoming retreat.

Commissioner Curry clarified that the CAP Workgroup is not intended to replace the Faith-Based Committee, although it may include some work with Faith-Based projects. However, it is questionable to have standing committees that are unable to meet.

Commissioner Kang added that certain restrictions pertaining to standing committees make it difficult to schedule meetings. Forming the CAP Committee broadens the work of the Faith-Based Committee encompassing a wider range of community/agency partnerships.

Commissioner Curry added that the Faith-Based Committee can always be revived at a later time as a Workgroup, if needed.

Chair Berger explained that disbanding the Faith-Based Committee and the focus of the Visitation Committee are separate issues.

Commissioner Sorkin added that part of the difficulty with conducting Committee meetings was establishing a quorum due to lack of participation of Committee members and suggested that this be discussed at the Commission's retreat.

After discussion and on motion of Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, seconded by Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, (Commissioners Olivas and Rudnick being absent) and Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW voting no, this item was approved.

7. Discussion and approval to authorize Commissioner Adelina R. Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW, representing the Commission for Children and Families, to file a "Petition and Order for Research" and as needed subsequent Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 827 Petitions, to facilitate youth focus groups on behalf of the Department of Children and Families (DCFS) Strategic Plan Workgroup (Workgroup), "Strategy 1.4.3-By December 2013 reduce the percentage of youth in care three years or longer by ten percent." The goal of the focus groups is to:
- a) better understand children and youth in care three or more years
 - b) assess whether the needs of children are being met;
 - c) assess whether children and youth have been engaged by the DCFS Children's Social Workers; and
 - d) utilize findings from these focus groups to assist in developing strategies for successful DCFS permanency plans. (13-3430)

Vice Chair Kleinberg expressed concern over the type of questions indicated in the petition that are intended to be used in the focus groups.

Commissioner Sorkin explained that the DCFS Strategic Plan Workgroup has been meeting on a monthly basis since the beginning of 2013; the Workgroup developed four hypotheses as part of its scope of work. One of the hypothesis developed addressed the lack of available resources for staff, family and children. The Workgroup determined to use focus groups as a means of testing this hypothesis. The four focus groups will take place in the Lancaster, Pomona, Metro North and Compton Offices. The petition draft version has since been updated with a different set of questions. The Youth selected to participate in the focus groups must be in care for 36 months or longer and in a Group Home. A DCFS employee will be present during the focus groups.

Chair Berger explained that the petition will be submitted to the Juvenile Court for approval and is not subject to the Commission's approval.

Laura Quinonez, County Counsel, stated that Commissioner Sorkin will be conducting the focus groups in capacity as a Commissioner and clarified the motion subject to the Commission's approval by reading the agenda entry.

After discussion and on motion of Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, seconded by Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, (Commissioners Olivas and Rudnick being absent) and Commissioner Patricia Curry abstaining, this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

IV. PRESENTATION

8. Presentation on the County's Development and Monitoring of Contracts.

- Department of Children and Family Services
- Department of Auditor-Controller
- Chief Executive Office
- Probation Department
- Office of County Counsel (13-3432)

Eric Marts, Deputy Director, Contract Services, DCFS explained that the development of contracts includes discussions with stakeholders. Under guidance of County Counsel, Statements of Work are crafted and then submitted to the Contract division to write the contracts. Contracts undergo a vigorous review.

Karen Richardson, Division Chief, Out-Of-Home Care Management, DCFS, reported the following:

- **As part of the process of preparing for the upcoming solicitation for Foster Family Agencies (FFA) and Group Homes, existing contractors were invited to participate in discussions providing feedback to develop the Statement of Work for this next solicitation on areas that can be improved with the existing contracts.**
- **DCFS began the monitoring of Group homes in 2009 and FFA's in 2011. The Compliance Monitoring reports are reviewed at the end of the year to determine the performance of the agencies; the agency must address any compliance issues in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The monitoring review process includes FFA and Group Home monitors conducting annual site visits. Prior to these visits, the special incident reports and any complaints are reviewed along with the agencies records.**
- **Site visits include interviewing the children, FFA certified foster parents and reviewing Group Home staff records. Additionally, records of youth that have been discharged from the facility are reviewed to ensure outcomes and goals have been met once they have left the agency. Although most visits are scheduled, if there are concerns, more frequent unannounced visits are conducted. Reports are developed based on the findings of these reviews. Once the review has been completed, an exit conference with the agency takes place and a CAP may be set in place if deemed necessary. Serious issues are addressed immediately;**

a temporary hold may be placed on the agency not allowing any children to be placed in the home. Annual Compliance reports are submitted to the Board of Supervisors (Board). Currently DCFS is monitoring 49 FFA's, 58 Group Homes and the Probation Department (Probation) is monitoring 22 Group Homes.

- In terms of the relationship between the Monitoring unit and the Ombudsman or Children's Social Worker (CSW), who receive reports from children, the Ombudsman communicates any concerns to the Monitoring unit. Concerns are also communicated to the case carrying CSW for follow up. Additionally, an objective of the Strategic Plan is to enhance oversight and monitoring that includes collaboration with CSW's.

Don Chadwick, Division Chief, Contract Monitoring Division, Auditor-Controller (A-C) reported the following:

- In April of 2013, the Board directed the A-C to work with DCFS to enhance the oversight of Group Homes and FFA contracts on programmatic and fiscal levels. On June 18, 2013, an interim report was provided to the Board indicating the steps being taken to strengthen the programmatic and fiscal monitoring of these contractors.
- Steps planned for the next year include DCFS conducting fiscal assessments of all Group Home and FFA contractors and compiling the findings every year. Working in conjunction with DCFS on fiscal audits will allow A-C to increase the frequency of fiscal audits. Currently, A-C conducts fiscal audits of these contractors every eight years, the goal is to conduct these fiscal audits every four years. More frequent audits will be conducted on contractors identified as a bad contractor during DCFS' fiscal assessments. A status report will be provided to the Board sometime in August that contains more concrete plans. This is a collaborative effort with Chief Executive Office (CEO), County Counsel, DCFS and Probation.
- Additional steps planned are to hold joint training sessions for the FFA's and Group Homes to better understand contract requirements. The training will include information on the evaluation of audits. Additionally, A-C will provide training and technical support to the DCFS monitors performing the fiscal assessments.

Mr. Marts added that the Contract Monitoring section will include Quality Assurance. As part of DCFS' assessments, a grading system will be

used to refer contractors with low scores to the A-C. Issues of corrective action will be handled by DCFS. Centralization of contract monitoring will be part of the enhancement effort.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, the presenters responded with the following:

- Mr. Marts explained that action is taken on agencies that are not providing services to the children regardless of the magnitude of the contractor. Additionally, under the new direction, a Contract Services Bureau was created to handle contracts. This new direction combines the Programs and Contracts sections allowing a better collaboration.**
- Mr. Chadwick explained that fiscal audits will continue to be conducted by A-C. The training for FFA's and Group Homes will be specific and helpful in ensuring that contractors are aware and understand the level of accountability they will be held to. The training also intends to reinforce the importance of contractors being diligent in hiring reputable accounting firms that provide financial reports that accurately reflect the contractor's operation. In terms of recommending accounting firms to the contractors, the County is unable to do so because of liability issues.**
- Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant Auditor, A-C Contract Monitoring Division, added that more of the issues are found with the bookkeepers. Often times, the turnover is high with the bookkeepers.**
- Lisa Campbell-Motton, Probation Department clarified that she works closely with DCFS on the compliance monitoring of Group Homes. The process discussed by DCFS applies to Probation as well. The compliance monitoring reports are on both DCFS and Probation's websites. Probation has a Group Home Monitoring telephone line set-up to receive calls. Most of the compliance referrals come from the State Ombudsman. There are approximately 900 to 1,100 Probation Youth placed in Group Homes. This number has significantly gone down from about five years ago. When DCFS and Probation monitors conduct site visits there is no distinction made when interviewing the youth; youth under supervision of both agencies are interviewed. These interviews play a major role in compliance monitoring.**
- Ms. Richardson explained that the contract requires Group Homes and FFA's to be a non-profit organization. The number of contractors that are religious based non-profits must be clarified and will be provided after the meeting.**

- **Michelle Day, Children's Group Home Ombudsman, A-C explained that she conducts unannounced visits for complaint driven calls into the hotline. However, many of the visits are announced in order to provide better outreach and let the youth know of the planned visit. There is constant communication with the Probation and DCFS Ombudsmen. A semi-annual report will be provided to the Commission.**

The Commission thanked the presenters for their presentation.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

V. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

9. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (13-3428)

There were none.

Announcements

10. Announcements for the meeting of July 22, 2013. (13-3429)

There were none.

Public Comment

11. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (13-3427)

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

Adjournment

12. Adjournment of the meeting of July 22, 2013. (13-3431)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.